

# Aberdeen seeks more grant funds for redevelopment around MARC station



A rendering of the Aberdeen Station Square, transit-oriented development area was produced by the Maryland Department of Transportation for public meetings in 2012. (Maryland Department of Transportation / Baltimore Sun)

By **Erika Butler** The Aegis **contact the reporter**

Aberdeen seeking more state grants for downtown revitalization around MARC station

Aberdeen city officials are applying for another state grant to buy more private properties in the downtown area, as they pursue a long-term vision of transit-oriented development around the MARC/Amtrak train station and Festival Park.

In recent years, the city has been buying various properties within a quarter-mile to a half-mile around the train station, a Transit-Oriented Development District,

also known as Station Square, which city officials hope will eventually become a focal point for residents and visitors alike.



Aberdeen moves forward with converting old Moose building into military museum

Mayor Mike Bennett and the City Council gave their support Monday to an application for a \$287,000 grant from the Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund through the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, according to Phyllis Grover, the city's director of planning and community development. The city has sought similar grants the past several years.

"We've had success in receiving a lot of money for this program," Grover said.

To this point, she said, a specific property has not been identified to be acquired with funds from the latest grant being sought.

In April, the city used money obtained through a grant last year to buy the property at 25 N. Philadelphia Blvd., a Victorian house that was recently damaged by fire and has been vandalized, Grover said.

During Monday's council meeting, a \$29,900 contract was awarded to A2Z Environmental Group LLC of Baltimore to demolish the two-story house.

Other properties the city has bought in recent years include 25 E. Bel Air Ave., a couple houses on Franklin Street across from Festival Park and the former Moose Lodge on North Rogers Street.

"We want to continue that," Grover said about future purchases.

The Franklin Street houses were razed last September and the site converted to a temporary parking lot, pending future redevelopment plans, such as businesses locating there. City officials are to turn the former Moose building into a military museum.

The mayor and council also gave their support Monday to an application for a \$50,000 grant from the Community Legacy Program of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Aberdeen has also received funding the last several years through this grant for privately owned building facade improvements.

Among the businesses within the designated sustainable community area that have applied to the city for and received previous grants include Hinder Ford, JP Chevrolet, Aberdeen Family Chiropractic and Silbaugh Memorials, Grover said. All are along Route 40 and in close proximity to the train station.

Businesses have to match the amounts they are awarded in grants, Grover said.

### **Street, drainage problems**

Andrea Jenkins, who lives on Taft Street in Winstons Choice, asked city officials when the road through her development would be paved. Residents have to drive through raised manhole covers and metal grates that aren't level with the road.

"If the pavement were brought up to road level, it would be safer," she said

City Manager Douglas Miller told Jenkins the road will eventually be paved, either by the developer or the city, which required the developer to post a bond.

If the developer fails to pave the road, he said, the city "will step in" and use the money the developer put up as bond to pave the road.

Cynthia Randall asked about an ongoing problem she's having in her neighborhood of all the water draining into her backyard. She said she's spoken with an engineer as well as the city and county but the issues has not been resolved.

"Something is wrong. I'm paying for a house I can even make full use of," Randall said.

Paradise Road resident Bob Hartman brought up several issues to the council: traffic backing up on Route 40 when cars in front are trying to turn right off Route 40 onto a side street; reducing the speed limit on Route 22 near Beards Hill Road that is under construction to improve safety; if there's a plan to return the dumpster near the recycling site; passing a law that requires people to wear their pants around their waist with a belt; and doing something to curb the "atrocious" language being used by some people in Festival Park.

Barbara Osborn Kreamer, of Beards Hill Road, suggested the city move as quickly as possible from a quarterly water billing cycle to a month one to save money for the residents on the city system, to conserve city water and to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

The next scheduled city meetings include a work session is Monday, Aug. 10 at 4 p.m.; a planning commission meeting Wednesday Aug. 12 at 7 p.m.; and a city council meeting Monday, Aug. 24 at 7 p.m.

Copyright © 2015, [The Baltimore Sun](#)